

# Rose Hill Rambler

FEBRUARY 2026

A quarterly newsletter for Rose Hill, Sunny Ridge Estates and Guilford neighborhoods from the Rose Hill Civic Association

## Shopping Center Redevelopment Put Off, Safeway Signs New Long-Term Lease

By Daniel Bearth

With the signing of a new long-term lease with Safeway, an anchor tenant at Rose Hill Plaza, officials from Combined Properties Incorporated said a plan to redevelop the shopping center, first proposed in 2022 and targeted to begin in 2027, will be put off and “reevaluated at a later date.”

The announcement represents a victory for neighborhood residents who expressed strong opposition to the redevelopment proposal, which would have replaced the existing retail center with a multi-story apartment building containing as many as 400 rental units, a parking garage and limited commercial space on the ground floor, plus a possible freestanding grocery store.

The proposal prompted former Bush Hill resident Sharada Gilkey to establish the Rose Hill Coalition to rally opposition and monitor land development issues in the Franconia and Rose Hill areas. The Rose Hill Civic Association also pressed Franconia District Supervisor Rodney Lusk to halt consideration of the



plan by Fairfax County planning officials and played a key role in generating public notice through the distribution of “Save Our Shopping Center” yard signs. A survey published in the Rose Hill Rambler and returned by 183 residents found a large majority of residents objected to redevelopment of Rose Hill Plaza because of concern over traffic congestion, increased population density and the loss of retail stores. An in-person vote was 69 opposed and 8 in favor of the redevelopment as proposed.

Aisha Hill, senior vice president of development and transactions for Combined Properties, in a statement to the Rambler, said, “Redevelopment activity at Rose Hill Plaza is paused for the time being and will be reconsidered in the future.”

“Our current focus,” she added, “is on supporting Rose Hill Plaza’s continued success as a strong neighborhood-focused destination for the community. The recent Safeway lease extension is a meaningful milestone reinforcing that commitment.”

(Continued on page 2)

### Rose Hill Civic Association

**JOIN US.** Annual dues: \$10. Mail: Box 10891, Alexandria, Va. 22310. Website: myrosehill.com. Facebook: Rose Hill Farm

**COME TOGETHER.** Meeting: Feb. 24 at 7 p.m. in John Marshall Library.

**VOLUNTEER.** Find out how you can help your neighbors, enhance traffic safety, monitor zoning and land use issues, support police, fire and emergency medical personnel, organize community gatherings, contribute to cleanup and beautification projects, distribute copies of the Rambler and more.

# RHCA Set To Finalize Position on Telegraph Road Development

The Rose Hill Civic Association is set to meet at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, February 24 in the community rooms of the John Marshall Library. On the agenda will be a final presentation on the plans to develop the former government property at 6801 Telegraph Road and an update on a revised proposal to build townhouses on a commercial site at 6404 Telegraph Road.

A committee consisting of residents from Rose Hill, Virginia Hills and Vantage has been working with the developer of 6801 Telegraph Road to put together a plan that will have the LEAST traffic impact on Telegraph Road and South Kings Highway. The current building on the property will be repurposed as senior housing, which produces much less traffic than conventional housing. In addition, 50 “cottage-style” single family homes will be built on what is now mostly a parking lot.



The goal has been to produce a plan that will meet both the developer’s financial goals and the community’s concern about additional traffic on our already-crowded roads. The traffic consultant we worked with estimates that the proposed development will add less than 2% to current traffic totals.

In addition, a developer is back with a new plan to develop townhouses on Highland Drive. We haven’t seen the actual plan yet, but it reportedly calls for building no more than 25 homes on the property. RHCA voiced opposition a plan for 30 homes last year because of concerns about the stability of marine clay in the area, density and traffic, and we see no reason to change our position. — *Carl Sell*

# Safeway Promises Improvements, Deal Struck on Donation Bins

(Continued from page 1)

Brian Miller, executive vice president, retail asset management at Combined Properties, said the Bethesda, Md.-based company is committed to maintaining Rose Hill Plaza as a neighborhood shopping destination and that Safeway would continue to operate “for more than a decade to come.”

RHCA President Carl Sell said, “We applaud Safeway for its commitment to Rose Hill and our surrounding neighbors. We wish them well and hope everyone will continue to support the store.”

As part of the lease extension, Safeway will invest in a refresh of the store which, according to Combined Properties officials, will provide “an even better customer experience.” Officials provided no details about what changes would be made, or when. Safeway also declined to comment further.

In a related development, Combined Properties said it signed a deal with a company in Maryland to place donation bins in the parking lot at Rose Hill Plaza and at other retail centers managed by the company in Maryland and Virginia. Previously, donation bins were not permitted on any of the firm’s retail sites.

The company providing and managing the bins is Main Source Trading Inc., based in District Heights, Md.

(Photo: Daniel Bearth)



# Public Comment Sought On Changes To Accessory Living Units

Fairfax County is seeking public input on potential changes to zoning regulations for accessory living units, which permit owners of single-family homes to add separate living space on their property, such as a basement apartment or backyard cottage.

Current zoning sets requirements for ALUs, including limits on size, occupancy, entrances and parking, some of which could be altered based, in part, on comments from community residents. To help county officials decide what changes to make, residents are asked to participate in an online survey, which can be accessed on the Fairfax County website.

Carl Sell, president of the Rose Hill Civic Association, expressed concern about loosening current restrictions on ALUs and encouraged residents to weigh in on the topic by completing a survey by February 28.

“The proposed changes present serious issues regarding parking on our already crowded streets, reductions in side yard restrictions, lot coverage, school numbers, etc.,” Sell said. “For example, an addition totaling 1,200 square feet is like adding an original Rambler on each lot. Chairman Jeff McKay of the Board of Supervisors has issued an appeal for response to the survey. Let’s make sure Rose Hill is heard.”

Between July 2021 and October 2025, Fairfax County has approved permits for 158 ALUs, including 14 in the Franconia District, out of 407 total applications. An ALU contains areas for eating, sleeping, living and sanitation and can provide flexible living arrangements for extended family members, live-in childcare providers, caretakers, renters and other similar situations.



Accessory Living Units – Existing vs. Proposed zMOD Standards

Current Accessory Dwelling Unit Regulations								
Age/Disability	Size	Approval Process	Location of Unit	Owner-Occupied	Max # of People	Parking	Renewal	Entrances
55+ / person with a disability	35% of principal structure	Special permit with public hearing	Interior; or Detached with 2+ acres	Yes – either principal or accessory unit must be owner-occupied	Two	Determined by BZA	Every five years with Zoning Administrator approval	Must be located on side or rear unless BZA approves alternative location
Public Hearing Draft Accessory Living Unit Regulations								
Age/Disability	Size	Approval Process	Location of Unit	Owner-Occupied	Max # of People	Parking	Renewal	Entrances
No change	Interior: 800 SF or 40% of the principal structure, whichever is less <sup>1</sup> Detached: 1,200 SF <sup>2</sup>	Interior: Administrative Permit <sup>3</sup> Detached: No change	No change	No change	No change	Interior: Must provide one additional off-street parking space above minimum required parking <sup>4</sup> Detached: No change	Initial renewal: two years; subsequent renewals up to every five years based on record of compliance	Location on side or rear applies to new entrances <sup>5</sup> Interior: any proposed garage/carport must be located immediately adjacent to any existing garage/carport and use the same driveway

<sup>1</sup> Advertised range from 500 – 1,200 SF or 40% of the principal structure, whichever is less. An option is included to allow the Board to consider allowing an interior ALU to exceed this size if the ALU is in the basement or cellar.  
<sup>2</sup> Advertised range from 700 – 1,500 SF  
<sup>3</sup> An option has been included to allow the Board to consider retaining the current special permit requirement.  
<sup>4</sup> For example, a single-family detached dwelling on a public street is required to provide two off-street parking spaces. This standard would require there to be a total of three off-street parking spaces in order to have an ALU administrative permit. If three spaces could not be accommodated, a special permit could be requested.  
<sup>5</sup> Modification of the entrance and access standards may be approved by special permit.

# Contractors Warn Residents To Stay Away From Stream Restoration Site

Contractors working on a stream restoration project that has closed portions of a paved trail that begins in the parking lot at the Rose Hill Apartments and follows the utility right-of-way to Horgan Court in Kingstowne issued a warning to residents to stay away from the construction site.

The warning was issued after two recent encounters with pedestrians who entered the restricted area after hours to view the construction site.

Project Manager Ian Vinson said a temporary access path is available that allows people to connect with Sutcliffe Drive in Kingstowne. (See photo at right)



# VDOT Weighs Road Improvements on South Van Dorn St.

Officials from the Virginia Department of Transportation are evaluating public comments on suggested changes to improve traffic flow and safety on a two and one-half mile stretch of South Van Dorn Street from the Alexandria City line and the Interstate 94/495 interchange to Telegraph Road.

Details about possible roadway modifications were presented at a community open house at Edison High School on Jan. 14.

Among the proposed improvements was widening of the intersection of Van Dorn and Franconia Road to accommodate dedicated turn lanes and new pedestrian crosswalks. Other changes would add pavement markers and new signage, relocate bus shelters and expand sidewalks for pedestrians and cyclists.

South Van Dorn traffic counts range from 14,000 to 37,000 vehicles a day, while Franconia Road traffic counts range from 22,000 to 32,000 a day.

VDOT is expected to complete its analysis by the end of 2026. — *Daniel Bearth*

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From Route 611 (Telegraph Road) to the Alexandria City Limits



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# Tobacco Store Moves Into Telegraph Road Center

Tobacco World has opened in a commercial building at 6404 Telegraph Road. The shop sells cigars and cigarettes, pipes and chewing tobacco, vapes, hookahs and smoking accessories.

The shop was previously located on Richmond Highway and was forced to move due to highway construction in the area.



A view of cigars inside Tobacco World.



The business is one of 20 tobacco and vape stores in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia that are owned by the same individual, according to a spokesman for the business. The company has been

in business for about 15 years and the owner's first store was, coincidentally, also located on Telegraph Road about two miles away. — *Daniel Bearth*

## Neighbors on Roundhill Help Police Nab Tool Thief

Steve Routt is the kind of guy who is always ready to help his neighbors. So when someone stole multiple power tools from the truck parked outside his house on Roundhill Road on Dec. 30, it was his neighbors who stepped up to help nab a suspect.

Fairfax County Police detectives said a witness observed a man removing items from a work van and took photos of the suspect and his vehicle. That, and surveillance footage, led to the apprehension of 58-year-old Jeffrey Kranz in the 6100 block of Richmond Highway on Jan. 9.



Jeffrey Kranz

Kranz is charged with grand larceny and possessing stolen property with intent to sell and is being held on a \$2,500 bond. — *Daniel Bearth*

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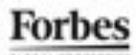
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## Homes For Sale (February 2026)

Status	Address	Bedrooms	Price	Finished Sq. Ft.	Subdivision
ACTIVE	4507 Tipton Lane	5	\$715,000	1,132	Sunny Ridge Estates
PENDING	6302 Saddle Tree Drive	4	\$725,000	1,952	Rose Hill Farms
PENDING	6219 Thornwood Drive	4	\$784,900	2,664	Hawthorne Manor
PENDING	6408 Maryview Street	3	\$800,000	2,672	Maryview
CLOSED	6120 Squire Lane	3	\$615,000	1,378	Sunny Ridge Estates
CLOSED	4500 Picot Road	4	\$650,000	1,590	Sunny Ridge Estates
CLOSED	4501 Apple Tree Drive	4	\$550,000	2,132	Rose Hill Farms
CLOSED	6307 Cottonwood Drive	3	\$575,000	1,352	Rose Hill Farms
CLOSED	6100 Leewood Drive	5	\$900,000	2,884	Rose Hill Farms
CLOSED	6420 Willowood Lane	3	\$620,000	2,004	Rose Hill

## Homes For Rent (February 2026)

CLOSED	4702 Eaton Place	4	\$3,100/mo.	1,600	Sunny Ridge Estates
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Source: Tom & Cindy and Associates

## Seen on the Street

Valentine’s Day is special for Robin Dodson.

“It was my Mom’s favorite holiday,” she says. “It also symbolizes love for me. Something our nation needs a little more now.”



A cherished memory for Robin is making her own cards for Valentine’s Day from construction paper at home with her mom.

February also happens to be National Heart Month, which Robin commemorates each year with a brightly lit tree, seen at left, in the front yard of her home on Wayside Place. — *Daniel Bearth*



(Photos: Robin Dodson)

**Members of the Rose Hill Civic Association or residents who provide services in kind qualify for a FREE listing in the business directory.**

### Photography

**Tisara Photography.** 703.625.2331. Specializing in family and business portraits and life events, Tisara Photography in Old Town Alexandria is now run by Nina Tisara's son, Steven Halperson. Nina lives on Hayfield Place.

### Heating and Air Conditioning

**Dove Heating and Air Conditioning.** We service and install heat pumps, air conditioners, furnaces, hot water heaters, and humidifiers. David and Linda Nichols, 703.971.8897. The Nichols have been in business for 38 years and have lived in Rose Hill for 49 years.

### Home-based Business

**Stampin' Up!** is a company specializing in decorative stamps for greeting cards, craft projects and memory keeping. The products are available for purchase through independent distributors. My name is Tracy and I'm a Stampin' Up demonstrator. Contact me at stampin13@yahoo.com.

### Home Improvement/Handyman

**TaskPro Plus** is veteran-owned and operated. Steven Routt brings professional-level skills to any kind of home repair or renovation project. Shed-building and removal is a specialty. 703.835.6414 Email: taskproplus@gmail.com

### Party Planning

**S&J Celebrations** specializes in balloon arches and kids' birthday parties. We have packages available based on what you are looking for. Follow us on Instagram @sandjcelebrations or call 703.688.2740. Email: sandjcelebrations@gmail.com

### Ministry to Coaches and Athletes

Steven Able represents the Fellowship of Christian Athletes in the Greater Fairfax South area, working with coaches and athletes at seven public high schools, including Edison. Email: sable@fca.org

### Education/Child Care

**Freedom Learning Center** provides educational support to families. We offer a preschool program, full-day to homeschoolers, homeschool enrichment classes and tutoring. In addition, we provide after school care to students in the Bush Hill community. Contact Heather Able at freedomlearningcenter7@gmail.com or go online to find more information at [freedomlearningcenter.org](http://freedomlearningcenter.org).

### Mental and Behavior Health Therapy

**Crescent Counseling Center** is a small woman-owned business that offers a variety of services such as individual and couples/family counseling, behavioral modification, parent coaching and consultation. We believe that compassionate care, high team morale and a calm environment are not only helpful to the therapeutic process, but absolutely essential. Established in West Springfield in April 2021 and now located off Franconia Road at 6400 Grovedale Drive, suite 200, in Alexandria. Contact Jessica Taylor online at [crescentcounselingva.com](http://crescentcounselingva.com) or call 571-414-9645.



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### RHCA Officers

**President:** Carl Sell, 703.971.4716, sellcarl@aol.com

**Vice President:** Rob Thomson, 703.597.6869, r6b2o@aol.com

**Secretary:** Vacant

**Treasurer:** Ken Marr, apechow@gmail.com

**Editor, *The Rambler*:** Daniel Bearth, 703.991.3723, idmbearth@aol.com

**Webmaster:** Brian Donohue, brianconohue@gmail.com

**Email Coordinator:** Vacant

### Rose Hill Civic Association

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Advertising in The Rambler is an excellent way to reach 1,000+ homes in our community. In addition, the ads are posted on our website, [www.myRoseHill.com](http://www.myRoseHill.com), for the world to see.

Listing in the business directory is free to members of the Rose Hill Civic Association and residents who own their own business.

*The Rose Hill Rambler is published 4 times a year in February, May, August and November*

Anyone interested in placing an ad can send it via email to Daniel Bearth at [idmbearth@aol.com](mailto:idmbearth@aol.com) in tiff or jpeg format. Make payments to the Rose Hill Civic Association, Box 10891, Alexandria, VA 22310.

# Civic Association Seeks New Members and Volunteers

The Rose Hill Civic Association is kicking off a membership drive. The list below reflects the names of residents who have paid dues or donated money over the past 12 months since March of 2025.

The association also relies exclusively on volunteers to work on

issues of concern to the community, including traffic safety and beautification projects. We rely on more than two dozen volunteers to distribute the Rambler to every home in the neighborhood.

We have a pressing need for people to serve as officers in the

civic association as well. Carl Sell, who has served as president for more than two decades, has said he would like to step down as soon as a replacement is found.

We are also in need of someone to serve as secretary and as email coordinator. — *Daniel Bearth*

## Rose Hill Civic Association (members as of February 2026)

### Apple Tree Drive

Julia Calhoun

### Bernard Avenue

Tom & Julie Paradis, Mark Allen & Ana Torres-Davis

### Blossom Lane

Barbara Digman

### Carriage Drive

### Climbhill Road

David & Nicole White

### Clovergrass Drive

### Cottonwood Drive

Marlene Hass Smith, Luis Castro, Robert Thomson, Cathy Mitchell, Jodie Wallace, Danny & Diane Bird

### Craft Road

Maron & Marian Selby, Kyle Schlarman

### Dew Grass Drive

Nina Weber

### Dove Drive

### Driftwood Drive

Arlene Shapiro, Bruce Jones, Elizabeth Sharp

### Eastchester Circle

Jeannette Bottomly

### Eaton Place

Catherine Long, Christin Berry, Cindy

Schmidtlein, Lew Moore

### Franconia Road

Theresa Blatt

### Greendale Road

### Hayfield Place

Kayla Hinrichs

### Haystack Road

Mark & Lorraine Broxterman, Jeska & Charles Pfefferle

### Lark Lane

### Leewood Drive

Yancey & Patricia Hull, Robert & Shirley Herr, Kowalik Family, Rodney & Kathryn Palmer, Katya Derzon, Michael Smith & Ratri Friend, Lindsay Holzrichter

### Lillian Drive

Donald & Carol Hakenson

### Maryview Street

Denise Smith, Stephen & Brenda Phillips, David & Beth Gurfein

### May Boulevard

Zoe-Ann Freitag, Shirley Staples-Bennington

### Mission Court

Cheri Schipper

### Picot Road

### Rose Hill Drive

B.T. Nguyen, Daniel & Ingrid Bearth,

Thomas & Alice Mangum, Mai & Thanh Luu, Sandra Benarick, Rachel Edwards, Carol Spurrier

### Rose Hill Farm Road

### Roundhill Road

Steve & Holly Dougherty, Charbel Antoun

### Saddle Tree Drive

### Silo Road

Linda Walton

### Squire Lane

Arline Moore, Mary Hertling, David & Johanna Wheeler, Donna Smith

### Sturbridge Place

### Telegraph Road

Mimi Minarik

### Thornwood Drive

Marge McConnell, Vereen Family,

Elizabeth Biddle

### Treetop Lane

Lori Scheibe, Edwina Brooks-Whitfield

### Wayside Place

Victor Grafton

### Willowood Lane

Raul Costillo, Ronald Machmer, Mike & Bonnie Greek

### Winston Place

Brenda Edleson

(Continued on next page)

## Talking About Trees with Jim McGlone, ISA Certified Arborist



*Jim McGlone welcomes your questions and comments about trees and plants. Contact him via email at: dofmcglone@gmail.com*

I often hear people say, "A little fertilizer can't hurt." But that is not true! After carbon, oxygen and hydrogen, which make up wood as cellulose and lignan, the most abundant elements in a tree are nitrogen and phosphorous. Nitrogen is used primarily in DNA, RNA, enzymes and proteins. Phosphorous makes up the 'rungs' of DNA and RNA, helps with energy movement in cells and is part of the cell membrane. Nitrogen and phosphorous are also two of the primary components of fertilizer.

Trees need energy from photosynthesis to use nitrogen. If they have surplus energy, they will grow roots to get more nitrogen; if they have surplus nitrogen, they will grow shoots to get more leaves for more energy. Applying fertilizer when it is not needed can upset the energy/nitrogen balance. This is a problem during the growing season because new shoots will have extra nitrogen and no defenses, making them extra tasty to pests. During the dormant season, extra nitrogen will discourage root growth when trees normally grow them (see last issue about trees in winter)

Phosphorus is usually not in limited supply in soil and does not promote root growth. Too much phosphorus can reduce iron uptake and cause a yellowing of leaves called chlorosis. Excess phosphorous interferes with trees taking in iron and can bind with iron in the soil to make iron phosphate, which makes the soil iron unavailable to the tree. Chlorosis reduces photosynthesis and weakens the tree.

There are certain soil fungi called mycorrhizal fungi that form partnerships with trees. The fungi provide nutrients, particularly nitrogen and phosphorous, and water to the tree and the tree gives sugar to the fungi. Trees actively recruit these fungi to increase the amount of water and nutrients they get. Overfertilization will cause the tree to not recruit the fungi, making it less resilient.

Commercial inorganic fertilizers increase the salinity of your soil. This makes it more difficult for your tree to absorb water from the soil. In extreme cases, it can cause the soil to suck water out of the tree.

Because of all these potential problems, you should NEVER apply fertilizer without first conducting a soil test. Virginia Cooperative Extension provides basic soil testing for \$10. Kits can be picked up at libraries and some nurseries.

(Continued from previous page)

**Other Contributors:** Lynne Haas Gomez, Owen McMahon & Carolyne Hathaway, Donna Winsor, Ali Ibrahim, Jesse Burdick, Sharada Gilkey

**Rambler Distributors:** Steve Routt, Warren Detrich, Peter Knudtson, Heather Justice, Gloria O'Neill, Mark Broxterman, Tammy Pagach, Janet Kazimir, Daniel Bearth, Linda Smith, Keith and Annelise Forshee, Bud Jencks, Deborah Snyder, Pamela

McKinley, Theresa Eppolito, Zoe-Ann Freitag, Karen Collins, Cody Palmer, Carol Bishop, Robbie Thomson, Vanessa S., Matt Eller, Malcolm Towle, Cathy Riddick, Candy Watts, Ryan Helland, Nina Weber

**RHCA Traffic Safety Committee:** Ann Marie McBride, Robert Riccio, Olivia Tuggle, Cathy Riddick

**RHCA Beautification Committee:** Robin Dodson, Rob Thomson, Teresa Boli, Margie Alston

**RHCA Welcome Committee:** Linda Hestvik

**FCPD Community Advisory Committee Representative:** Hunter Forte

**RHCA Entrance Sign Committee:** Carl Sell, Wes Hanney, Ronja Roberts, Gene Sible, Tom Kopko, Cathy Riddick, Rob Thomson, Kyle Schlarman

# Gardening in Rose Hill With Peggy Riccio, Virginia Horticulturist

Gardeners like to start seeds indoors to get a jump on warm season plants such as tomatoes, peppers, and melons. Before you begin to sow, here are a few tips.

A seed packet from a reputable company should state when to begin. It may say “start inside 5 to 6 weeks before your average last frost date.” For us, the last frost date, which is really a 10 percent chance, is the end of April/beginning of May. Mother’s Day is no risk of frost, so I count backwards from Mother’s Day, and sow tomato seed the last week in March.

You need to use adjustable fluorescent tubes or grow lights--the sun through the window is not enough. Seedlings are grown an inch away from the light source, which must be on for 14 to 16 hours daily.



You can find an assortment of containers at the nursery, plastic with drainage holes is best. You can insert drainage holes in small plastic, fruit, or yogurt cups and place a plastic tray underneath.

Use a seed starting mix which is porous for seeds to push through. Water the mix so it is moist, tamp down so it is level, and press the seeds in so they are in contact with moist soil. Then water again to soak the seeds. Usually, fine seeds need light to germinate while larger seeds should be buried; check the seed package.

Once you start, you cannot stop. Do not go on vacation. You need to keep the seeds moist until germination because if they dry out, they are no longer viable.

Heat mats are only necessary if you are sowing in a cold area like a basement. Not all plants need this and not all places in the home need extra warmth.

The cotyledons emerge first and they will look like leaves, but they are not true leaves. Eventually, they will shrivel and die off while true leaves emerge from them. True leaves will begin photosynthesizing. Decrease watering as seedlings emerge because the roots are now deep in the container taking up water. The soil surface can look a little drier than when you first sowed.

When there are one or two sets of true leaves, transplant the seedlings into a larger container. At the end of April, start hardening off by moving containers outdoors on a warm day, in the shade and sheltered from wind (place in a box). Do this daily for a few hours, gradually increasing the time and sun and wind exposure. When the seedlings have acclimated to the outdoor elements, you can plant them in the ground.

*Peggy Riccio is a local horticulturist and garden communicator. Subscribe to her free monthly gardening newsletter, [Pegplant's Post Gardening Newsletter](#), by entering your email on her website, [pegplant.com](#), an online resource for gardening the DC metro area.*

### ROSE HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please fill out this form and mail, along with your check, to:  
RHCA, Box 10891, Alexandria, VA 22310

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

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\$\_\_\_\_ Donation for replacement and upkeep of Rose Hill entrance sign. \$\_\_\_\_ Donation for RHCA General Fund.



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# Rose Hill Resident Launches Urban Farm Business To Cultivate Honey and Wildlife Connections

By Lydia Lawless

Founder, Aster Waves Urban Farm

Firstly, thanks to our community for supporting Aster Waves, the micro farm business I founded in 2025. I am honored to be sharing our story in The Rambler.

The seeds for Aster Waves were planted during the 1990s when my teenage self maintained an extensive garden and worked on horse farms. My interests in horticulture and animal husbandry have persisted, although they were sometimes muted by life circumstances.

However, over the last decade, my farming dreams experienced several accelerants:

- 1) The purchase of my home in Rose Hill (with land...and dirt!) after years of apartment living.
- 2) The development of my interest in wildlife conservation, especially pollinators, resulting in my property becoming a certified wildlife sanctuary.
- 3) As an extension of this interest, becoming a beekeeper and the correlated bee husbandry mentoring I've received; and
- 4) Due to my husband's veteran status, our participation in Arcadia Farms Veteran Farmer Reserve training program during 2025.

Of these, the Arcadia program was especially impactful for formalizing my interests in wildlife conservation and sustainable agriculture into a fledgling but more formal farm business.

As an enterprise, Aster Waves' mission is to strengthen our community through accessible and sustainable agriculture. We hope to humanize a connection to farming and drive better harmony with each other and with wildlife. The support and engagement we have received from our neighbors thus far gives me hope that we are on the right path.



Interestingly, the very nature of beekeeping drives connection. Bees demand a high skill level. I benefited from working with mentors, and now that my skill level has matured, I am mentoring new beekeepers and running for an officer position with the Northern Virginia Beekeepers Association.

For the near term, we seek to drive a big impact despite our ¼ acre suburban lot. Bees provide a unique opportunity when land is limited as their space requirements are far less than most other livestock. Additionally, many beekeepers have multiple apiaries at no additional cost due to the desirability of bees' presence for pollination. Honey, as a crop, is conducive to small-scale farming because of its shelf life; it lasts thousands of years in optimal conditions which helps avoid perishability losses. Honey is also a highly desired product; it has terroir, similar to wine, which means the taste is highly dependent on its growing environment. Our honey naturally changes throughout the year and from year to year but always reflects the terroir of Rose Hill.

Bees are industrious creatures; with only a few hives, our 2025 honey crop neared 25 gallons, which is higher than average and likely the result of my other gardening activities. Thanks to the support of our community, most of this inventory is sold and I expect the business to be profitable in 2026.

Honey is indeed a sweet part of our story, although we are writing more chapters. Our current product list goes beyond honey to include beeswax, loofah and birdhouse gourds, and during 2026, we plan to further experiment with flowers, attend more markets and continue to explore purchasing additional land.

If you are interested in following our journey, you can find us at [asterwaves.com](https://asterwaves.com), on Instagram (@aster\_waves\_urban\_farm), on Nextdoor (Aster Waves Urban Farm) and at our home at 4404 Roundhill Road.



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Next time you're outside take a close look at your roof (most people don't pay attention to it until there's a problem). How does it look? Is it rough and weathered? Are the shingles "curling or cracking? Is one section very distinguishable from all other areas? Finally, are you proud of the way your roof helps "show" your home, or are you embarrassed by its appearance?

**Remember:** By the Time you have waited "as long as possible," you have probably waited too long and will end up spending your hard earned money on interior and sub-structure repairs as well as much needed roof replacement.

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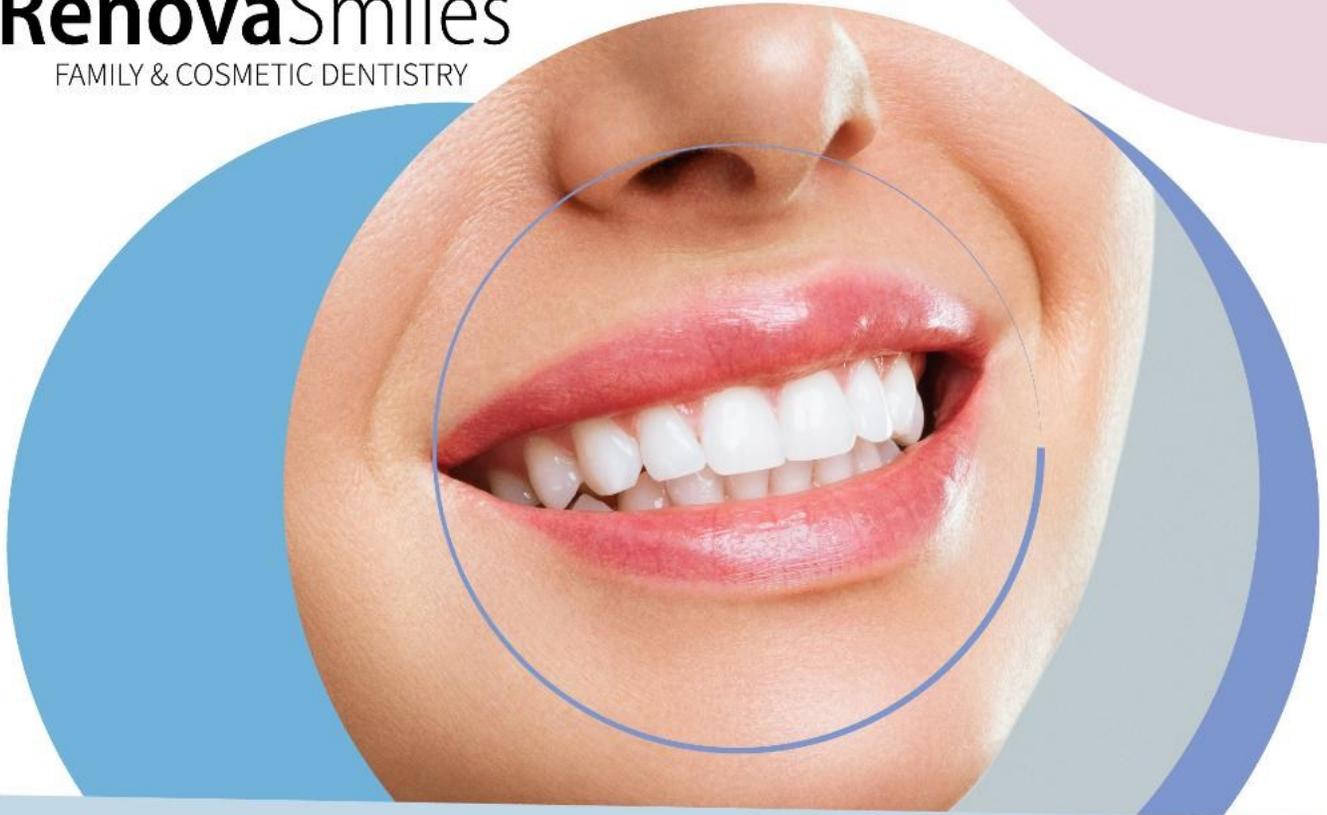
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